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Viewing cable 09SANJOSE602, TFHO1: HONDURAS TALKS ROUND TWO: PREVIEW OF ARIAS

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09SANJOSE602	2009-07-17 21:59	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy San Jose

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-03-18/Investigacion/NotasSecundarias/Investigacion2716690.aspx>

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-03-18/Investigacion/NotasSecundarias/Investigacion2716698.aspx>

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CS, HO

SUBJECT: TFHO1: HONDURAS TALKS ROUND TWO: PREVIEW OF ARIAS
HOSTED DIALOGUE

REF: A. SAN JOSE 587

Classified By: CDA Peter M. Brennan for reason 1.4 (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: On Saturday, July 18, President Arias will host the second round of talks to mediate an acceptable solution to end the political crisis in Honduras. The first round of talks took place on July 9-10 with little progress made (Ref A). Minister of the Presidency, Rodrigo Arias, relayed to us on July 15 that Arturo Corrales of Micheletti's delegation told him that their delegation was looking at a variety of possible resolutions, including putting a third party in the presidency. Arias was not so certain that Zelaya's delegation was as ready to negotiate due to recent ratcheted-up rhetoric including the "right to insurrection" coming from Zelaya's team (Ref B). On July 17, MFA Foreign Policy Director Alejandro Solano relayed to us a possible agenda for the talks (para three below).

12. (U) Although there has not been an arrest warrant issued for Micheletti in Costa Rica, two Costa Rican legislators petitioned for one in case Micheletti were to land in Costa Rica. However, according to a radio address from President Arias on July 16, neither Zelaya nor Micheletti would be attending this weekend's talks. Delegations are listed at paragraphs nine and ten below. END SUMMARY.

13. (C) This weekend, July 18-19, will mark the second round of talks to address the Honduran political crisis that began on June 28. Minister Arias (President Arias' brother) told us on July 15 that he had spoken with and possibly detected a changed, slightly more forthcoming attitude from Micheletti delegation member Arturo Corrales. Arias was not sure if this change in attitude was only from Corrales or perhaps was reflective of a change on the part of Micheletti's team in general. Based on information from Minister Arias and what MFA Solano told us July 17 (similar to Ref C), here is a preview of the agenda that President Arias will evidently use for this weekend's talks:

- How Zelaya could return to Honduras;
- Composition of any type of national unity government until the November elections;
- Political amnesty for all involved in this confrontation (however, not amnesty for criminal acts);
- Discuss possibility of removing top military leadership to ease transition for a national unity government; and
- Composition of possible verification commission to ensure any agreement is being honored.

14. (C) Arias and subsequently FM Bruno Stagno told CDA Brennan they felt that Corrales (and the Micheletti team in general) was approaching this seriously and in good faith, and felt that this laid the right foundation for this weekend's discussions. On the other hand, Arias was not as sure about the Zelaya team with all the recent saber-rattling rhetoric from Guatemala and other locations over the past few days. He was confident, however, that in the end they would attend the talks. MFA Solano relayed to us that apparently Zelaya had agreed (in a phonecall to President Arias July 16) not to call for a national referendum, if reinstated.

15. (C) Arias indicated that the noise and maneuvering at the OAS level had not been helpful, but thought that if it could be kept in check for the moment and progress could be made this weekend, that might quiet those elements down. Arias recognized that the negotiations would be tough, particularly due to the Zelaya team's (and cohorts) antics.

16. (C) CDA Brennan conveyed to Arias Ambassador Llorens' idea of trying to heal/reconcile some of the splintered old Liberal elements via Flores, Corrales and others in order to reach an agreement. Arias agreed and said that they were working on that angle as well.

17. (C) On July 15, Alberto Salom (head of Citizen's Action Party-PAC) and Jose Merino (from Frente Amplio party),

petitioned the prosecutor's office to arrest Micheletti if he came to Costa Rica for the talks. According to our sources within the judicial powers, however, no arrest warrant has been issued. Otton Solis, the PAC's 2010 presidential candidate, quickly disavowed any party support for Salom's petition and declared his support for dialogue to resolve the Honduran crisis. According to the press on July 17, Costa

Rican Attorney General Francisco Dall'Anese apparently ordered all police forces not to detain Micheletti if he were to enter the country.

COMMENT

¶8. (C) As FM Bruno Stagno told us on July 16, they are "cautiously optimistic" about the talks this weekend based upon their preliminary discussions with Micheletti's staff and some limited contact with Zelaya's team. The current make-up of the Zelaya team (without the more radical Patricia Rodas) could also indicate a willingness to come to a solution. However, late additions such as Rodas could occur and might further complicate the dialogue, though the Costa Rican MFA has assured us that Rodas will not be coming this weekend. Although the petition of an arrest warrant for Micheletti does not seem to have any legs and AG Dall'Anese's order not to arrest him seems legitimate, it is nonetheless a bit worrisome given Dall'Anese's sympathetic political tendencies and his attraction to the limelight.

¶9. (U) Zelaya's delegation:

- Aristides Mejia, Vice President and former Minister of Defense;
- Milton Jimenez, former Foreign Minister; and
- Enrique Flores Lanza, Secretary of the Presidency.

¶10. (U) Micheletti's delegation:

- Carlos Lopez, former Foreign Minister;
- Arturo Corrales, president of the Unity and Innovation Party (PINU);
- Mauricio Villeda, Vice-Presidential candidate for the Liberal party; and
- Vilma Cecilia Morales, former president of the Supreme Court of Justice.

WILSON